



SOUTHEAST NEWS

PUBLISHED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Volume 43, Number 3

Summer (August-October) 1995

"The VOICE of ONE ..."

The 1995 Annual Meeting of the Southeast Conference of the United Church of Christ celebrated an intriguing theme, *"The Voice of ONE..."* How important it is for all of God's people to be heard and have voice in decisions made in church and society. In God's Shalom no one is voiceless! This theme was spoken and practiced at our gathering at the Simpsonwood retreat.

So, was the Annual Meeting worth the time and effort? That is the sort of question that has to be answered each year when the SEC has completed its Annual Meeting. This year we were at the very attractive Simpsonwood Conference Center north of Atlanta, and this year for the first time in many years, the Planning Committee reported we had "broken even" financially.

But that is no justification, is it? Well, this year, in terms of program, we passed a restructuring of the entire Conference, a measure designed to put more of our dollars to work for us and spend less on meetings. It will go into effect when the necessary constitutional changes are ratified next year. That was important.

This year, as always, we had excellent keynote speakers, Mary Susan Gast of the Coordinating Center for Women, and Daniel Romero of the World Board. And careful, tasteful worship as we examined the theme: "The Voice of One ..." with a fine logo by Betsy Flory.

Perhaps the highlight of our year was the report of the Conference Retreat Center Committee, saying that the land "Miss Lala" Allen has offered for our use looked right for a small multipurpose set of buildings. The delegates passed an action to establish an endowment funds for the Southeast Conference Retreat Center. Your contributions are welcomed. We'll hear more about it locally in the months to come. Annual Meeting said, "Tell the churches."

The sad, but triumphant farewell of Roger Knight and (in advance) of Mitch Johnson, filled one evening and one morning session. Who would have thought Nan Wright could do a perfect imitation of Beth Knight as a song leader? We learned a lot about Colonel Mitch, too. And then we said hello to Edwin (Ed) Mehlhaff, who will keep us going while our Search Committee finds us a new Conference Minister.

It was a happy meeting for the most part, in a setting that inspired us, set among trees and overlooking the Chattahoochee River. Ah, but next year, so we

have heard, look out Sewanee, Tennessee! Al Jolson may have set the tone long ago, "Swanee, how I love ya!"

So, was it worth all the effort? The meeting renewed many things, not least the covenant we make with one another to work for the glory of God in this area of God's vineyard. Yes, it was worthwhile!

Actions taken:

- 1) Welcome Ed & Dona Mehlhaff, Interim Conference Minister
- 2) Approved new structure for Southeast Conference (see May 1995 *Southeast News*)
- 3) Established a Southeast Conference Retreat Center Endowment Fund
- 4) Elected new persons to the Southeast Board of Directors and commissions (see May 1995 *Southeast News*, slate of nominations for names)
- 5) Adopted a 1996 budget of \$242,000.00

Highlights:

Grateful for Karl Whiteman's primary leadership
Blest with wonderful special music: the songsters from Amistad United Church of Christ; the solo voice of Jim Walker, minister of music at Cullman St. John's; and the keyboard magic of Tom Zimmerman of Belvidere First.
Informed with excellent displays
Refreshed with renewed friendships
Reminded that the Southeast Conference is not only diverse in culture/ethnicity, but laden with talented persons
Honored our three Distinguished Laywomen in the Conference: Lala Allen, Clara Lowe and Audrey Livingston
Honored Mitch Johnson for his service as Associate Conference Minister
Honored clergy for ordination anniversaries
Recognized the Iowa-Southeast Conference Partnership
Good worship experiences and the celebration of Holy Communion
Noted that the "Make A Difference Campaign" funds achieved a high level of support. Dollars pledged are now over \$278,000!!!

Dick Sales and Ed Mehlhaff

Interim Conference Minister

Ed Mehlhaff was born 14 April 1928 in Lowry, South Dakota. He received his education at Yankton College in South Dakota, Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, Chicago Theological Seminary and was ordained 22 September 1954 at Grace Congregational in Mobridge, South Dakota.

Ed and his wife, Dona, have four children: Karla, Wynn, Debra and Drew who have given them a total of five grandchildren. Ed's hobbies include loving his grandchildren, classical music, writing, yard work and laughing (If you don't think God has a sense of humor, just look at the person sitting next to you).

Ed's ministry has included serving four congregations: in Lincoln, Nebraska (400 members); Russell, Kansas (250 members); Chicago, Illinois (500 plus members); and Fremont, Nebraska (800 plus members). Ed served as associate conference minister in the South Central Conference for eleven years; spent part-time in the SEC (1978-79), Stewardship/Church Development; and was South Dakota Conference Minister from 1987 to 1994.

Of his 1994 retirement, Ed says, "It was fun getting up in the morning with nothing to do, and not start that 'till noon."

Some of Ed's favorite quotes are:

"The UCC is a church where Jesus takes away your sins but not your minds."

"If you have more than you need, you have that which belongs to someone else."

Nigerian saying: "It is the heart that does the giving, the fingers only let go."

A pastor's prayer: "Lord, place your right hand on my shoulder and youth other hand over my mouth."

Dona Mehlhaff is a delightfully warm and caring person. She has always been active, especially in the areas of choir, Christian Education and women. Dona served as Ed's secretary for the eleven years he was associate conference minister. She usually accompanies Ed when he visits churches, so many of you will have the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with her personally.

1996 ANNUAL MEETING

SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE, U.C.C.

MAY 31 THROUGH JUNE 2, 1996

School of Theology, University of the South

Sewanee, Tennessee

Mark Your Calendar Today!

PLAN now to ATTEND!

Pre-Registration Materials Will be Available in Early 1996

CONFERENCE COMMENTS:

Interim Conference Minister's Message:

Greetings to the Saints of the Southeast Conference

I have always been inspired by William Carey, English missionary to India in 1874. A selfless man who cast his life into God and Christ's call to reach out to others in word and deed. He was truly a "man for others." his unquestioned commitment is concisely summarized in these profound and inspiring words, "I SERVE the Lord and cobble shoes to pay the way." Or again, "Expect great things from God, do great things for God."

All of us are called to ministry, that is, all of us who have said “yes” to God through Jesus Christ! It is thereafter not a matter of “will we serve” but rather “where will we serve.” To awaken each day acknowledging that we know whose we are and therefore who we are, empowers us to recognize that God has given us gifts and graces to be an upbuilding presence in our daily living. God invites us to be in partnership with Him in the care of His creation! We are God’s family, living in the same house (earth), and eating at the same table. It is our task to join God in making room for all of his children at God’s table.

So, let us serve the Lord and “do great things for God” because God has done and is doing great things for us! Let us not only be good neighbors, but let us serve one another. Let us be an upbuilding presence to one another. As Rufus Jones states it:

“Nobody knows how the kindling flame of life and power leaps from one life to another ... You hear a few quiet words, or see some deeds, from one with the kindling torch and you suddenly discover what life means to you. You become another person, carrying your own torch ...

“There is something in a person’s inmost being that can be kindled and struck into flame by God, a flame of God’s life ... Religion is not an addendum to life, not something added on to a bankrupt life ... But the filling of life with vitality and meaning.”

Or, as Penny Tressler wrote: “We are like wicks in an eternal candle.” Oftentimes, our beauty exists in being colorful candles, but our real beauty emerges when someone sets fire to us and we shed light and hope wherever we are.”

Note that Jesus’ metaphors describing who followed him were images that exhibited dynamism; they were CHANGE AGENTS. Remember? He called us light, salt, leaven, servant and friend. All of these images suggest a living, dynamic force, a force that makes a difference.

Will you make a difference where you are ... a positive difference in your home, your church, your community, and your Conference? Will you make a difference by not being violent as a husband, father, citizen? Will you make a difference by helping your church reach beyond its own borders? (A church that doesn’t reach out fades out). Will you make a difference by being an upbuilder? “Here I am, send me!”

Some of us may be saying, “I have nothing to offer!” God did not make any nobodies. God asks for our availability first and our capability second. God equips us for the task. God cannot do anything for us or with us until we say, “Here I am, send me.” God gives us no assignment without providing the tools to do the work. If we wait for being fully equipped, our ship will never leave the shore. Someone put the matter in these words:

“Life with God as Father is the kingdom of danger and of risk, of eternal beginning and of eternal becoming, of opened spirit and of deep realization, the kingdom of holy insecurity. May His leading bring us through many new lands,

enabling us to be perpetual pilgrims on our faith quest, in the Spirit of Christ, our Lord."

I hope you will be able to pray this prayer with me:

"We depart from what has gone before, for better or for worse, Lord, and strike upon the hopeful opportunities of the days yet to come. Heal us from our mistakes of the past and deliver us from the arrogance of prejudice, the delusion of pride, the extravagance of greed, the pity of involvement.

"Turn not away from us, Lord, in the presence of our iniquities. Forgive us, renew us, inspire us, that we may evolve maturely beyond our crooked paths of yesterday. This we pray in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

"Amen."

Ed Mehlhaff
Interim Conference Minister

Associate Conference Minister

Reflections on our Travels ... Vacation in Europe

We have long felt that vacations should be relaxing and refreshing, effecting in the process, renewal and reorientation to the person or persons involved. That has truly happened to me and Helen as a result of our vacation to England and Europe which has just ended. We had been planning and saving for it many moons before it happened, July 10 through July 24. Our actual experience finally made the planning and waiting worthwhile. We share some brief reflections here.

First, we have ample awareness that we are not the first nor will we be the last to enjoy such travel. Several associates and friends in our own Southeast Conference family volunteered helpful hints and substantial guidance on what to see and so based on their own recent travels to Europe. We heeded all such information and found wisdom in it. Second, European travel is evidently more widespread and thereby affordable for vastly increased numbers and categories of people. We found ourselves immersed in youth groups, senior citizens, corporate employees, church groups, etc. from all over the United States and indeed the world. I simply cannot imagine a future world in which this grassroots exchanging of people and cultures will not have a salutary effect upon our ongoing struggles for justice and peace everywhere. For instance, we will not soon forget an old lady, a native of Salzburg, Austria, going out of her way from across the room to stop by our dining table briefly to compliment our present in her world of "sameness" and boredom as she genuinely welcomed us to her town and country. Nor will we take lightly our experience and implications of having our reserved seats on a German train taken by a native gentleman with austere and formidable presence, a stereotypical Nazi type. He seemed intent on "squatters' rights" but soon gave in and got up when confronted with censoring glances and negative facial expressions from others of his race and nationality around about. Then to experience the pleasures of our extended family at a little town and community at Hamburg, Germany with our daughter-in-law and one of our grandchildren and their native

family. We enjoyed a brief visit and a neighborhood festival with an oomp-pah band as well.

Yes, the sights in Munich, Salzburg, Paris and London were all great and we have numerous pictures to prove it. But our central enjoyment, refreshment and renewal was in community with all of God's people from around the world. It has made us even more appreciative of being a part of our multi-racial, multi-cultural Southeast Conference community. We are back at work with a clearer and broader vision of the world in which we offer our gifts.

Mitchell Johnson
Associate Conference Minister

OCWM GIVING LAST QUARTER & YEAR TO DATE

	April-June	Total 1995
ALABAMA-TENNESSEE ASSN.		
Alpine, King's Chapel	109.00	159.00
Athens, Trinity	.00	.00
Belvidere, First UC	2,139.00	3,401.00
Birmingham, First CC	1,000.00	2,000.00
Birmingham, Pilgrim	1,350.00	2,700.00
Chattanooga, First CC	.00	.00
Chattanooga, Pilgrim	4,388.33	6,584.33
Chattanooga, Sheares	.00	.00
Crossville, UCWF	300.00	300.00
Crossville, United CC	750.00	1559.75
Cullman, St. John's	2,025.00	3,375.00
Deer Lodge, Congregational	600.00	600.00
Fairfield Glade, CC	925.00	1,850.00
Garden City, CCC	231.00	231.00
Glenmary, CCC	.00	.00
Hanceville, Mountain Grove	.00	.00
Huntsville, United Church	3,600.00	3,600.00
Knoxville, Church of the Savior	.00	.00
Marion, First Congregational	.00	.00
Montgomery, First	.00	.00
Nashville, First UCC	1,666.68	2,500.02
Nashville, Brookmeade	236.25	472.50
Nashville, Howard	.00	.00
Pleasant Hill, Community Church	4,125.00	8,250.00
Robbins, Barton Chapel	.00	.00
Sweetwater, First	250.00	250.00
Talladega, First	100.00	100.00
Tougaloo, Union UCC	.00	.00
Waverly, UCC	80.00	80.00

	24,055.26	38,012.60
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EAST AL/W GA

Alex City, First	.00	.00
Columbus, United	.00	.00
Dadeville, Elder	.00	555.00
East Tallassee, CC	100.00	100.00
Eclectic, Watson's Chapel	.00	.00
Five Points, State Line	.00	.00
LaFayette, Pleasant Grove	422.00	788.00
LaGrange, Hillside	.00	.00
LaGrange, United	194.00	499.00
Lanett	750.00	1,250.00
Langdale	.00	.00
Phenix City, Russell Woods	380.00	750.00
Pine Forest	.00	.00
Pine Mountain, Oak Grove	.00	600.00
Roanoke, Antioch	570.00	570.00
Roanoke, Bethany	.00	.00
Roanoke, Forest Home	.00	.00
Roanoke, New Hope	.00	570.00
Roanoke, North Main	.00	380.00
Roanoke, Rock Stand	.00	.00
Valley, Todd Congregational	.00	.00
Wadley, Corinth Christian	119.00	119.00
Wedowee, Noon day	.00	.00
West Point, Bethel	.00	.00
Woodbury, Jones Chapel	711.00	1,185.00
	3,246.00	7,376.00

GA/SC

Atlanta, Center	.00	.00
Atlanta, Central	6,894.99	13,789.98
Atlanta, First	743.05	743.05
Atlanta, Rush	.00	.00
Atlanta, Southwest	.00	.00
Atlanta, UCC	.00	.00
Beachton, Evergreen Congregational	.00	.00
Buford, Duncan's Creek	.00	.00
Central Congregational Women	.00	200.00
Charleston, Circular	666.66	1,999.98
Charleston, Plymouth	.00	.00
Columbia, Fellowship	25.00	25.00
Demorest, Federated	.00	.00

Dewy Rose, Liberty	.00	.00
GA-SC Association	.00	.00
Jonesboro, Trinity	.00	1,875.00
Marietta, Amistad	.00	.00
Marietta, Pilgrimage	2,200.00	2,750.00
Midway, Congregational	.00	200.00
Savannah, First	400.00	1,000.00
Thomasville, Bethany	.00	.00
	10,929.70	22,701.07

S. ALA/N.W. FLA

Andalusia, Antioch	.00	.00
Andalusia, First	110.00	275.00
Baker, Good Hope	.00	.00
Baker, Pyron	.00	.00
Bonifay, New Effort	.00	.00
Brantley, Indian Creek	.00	.00
Brantley, Liberty	100.00	200.00
Clio, New Hope	.00	.00
	210.00	475.00

OUR OCWM STATUS ...

Information – Encouragement

This is the time of year when everything slows down, except the hours you and I have to work! Our Church's Wider Mission income is also down to a trickle. Unfortunately, we continue to be called upon to pay the bills for Conference operations. Our budget is \$160,000. This means that our monthly income should be \$13,333 per month. At the present time we are at \$68,564 through the end of June. Cash flow for all of our settings is difficult, isn't it? Our Conference average for the first six months is about \$12,000.

I share this information with you because I believe in openness in all matters. We can't do much about a situation about which we have no information. Is your congregation sending in OCWM monies? We are grateful for your support to date! THANK YOU!

Perhaps you would like to know what the OCWM dollar is doing for our life together. Let me list but a few of them:

An urgent item is pastoral placement. We have fifteen vacancies.

Counseling with laity and clergy

Providing support for clergy

Planning the work with the commissions

Tracking finances

Facilitating new church starts

Preparing the *Southeast News*

Provide the wider church linkage
Produce a pastoral packet
Keep good records
Provide resources for pastors and congregations
Assist local congregations with goal setting, stewardship and evangelism, etc.
Work with and resource Church and Ministry committees
Be available for crises
Resource the Board of Directors
Conference staff salaries
Office staff salaried for the hard and wonderful work they do
Travel expenses for Conference staff, making it possible to be with pastors and local churches
Provide printed material and videos for local church programs
Postage and telephone costs
The list goes on and on. I believe we get a lot of bang for the OCWM buck!
And, if we want the above thing to take place, we must provide the dollars. Tithing would get the job done locally and in the Conference! Please help the Conference do its work by supporting it with your OCWM dollar. We are here, laity, clergy and Conference staff to empower ministry. Call us.

Ed Mehlhaff
Interim Conference Minister

SEC Attends General Synod

Delegates

Rev. Wayde Washburn
Ms. Rebecca Paschal
Ms. Deborah Douglas
Rev. Andrew Frierson

Associate Delegates

Rev. Dick Sales, Moderator
Rev. Ed Mehlhaff, Interim Conference Minister

Birmingham, First Congregational Church

Rodney Franklin, Pastor
James Myers
Beverly Richardson
Connie Moorer
Mattie Scott
Lillian Harrington
Milton Hurst
David Mann

Atlanta, First Congregational Church

Susan Newman, Pastor

Bette Graves-Thomas

Essie Holman

Lilton Marks

Lori Paschal

Clara Lowe, Honored Laywoman

Bernard Thomas

Judith Tuck

Raynard Townsel

Others

Dona Mehlhaff

Ted Braun, *Balaam's Courier*

David Menchhofer, Floor Steward

Annie Neal, Key Parliamentarian

Barbara Everett, Executive Council

Peggy Muenstermann

Annie Frierson

Donna Braun, *Balaam's Courier*

Duncan Everett

Audrey Livingston, Honored Laywoman

SEC Has Input to Board of the Department of Medical Assistance of Georgia

Note: The Georgia/South Carolina Association recently appointed Rev. Edward M. Brown as chairman of a sub-committee on health and human services to relate our Georgia congregations to the impending changes in the Medicaid system. At a recall meeting of the Georgia Department of Medical Assistance, July 12, 1995, Rev. Brown read the following public statement to the Board of Medical Assistance:

"This Board of Medical Assistance, as appointed by Governor Zell Miller, is accountable to the citizens of Georgia directly and only through the Governor. You have invited the input of the public as you seek to devise the most effective and responsible structures for providing health care to Georgia Medicaid patients.

"The experience of our neighboring states of Florida and Tennessee, as well as that of the state of California, would suggest that we benefit from their learnings. Sufficient time should be taken to examine the advantages and limitations of 'capitation' payments through Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs). Questions of access and quality of care, the patient load of doctors and nurses, in particular the responsibility of Emergency Room Doctors for non-HMO

members—these and related problems require careful planning before making a final decision.

“Relationships between HMOs and other state Medicaid systems have surfaced certain criteria which need to be built into any state system, namely:

whether patients can get independent information to help them choose an HMO.

whether the state makes sure the HMO consistently meets high quality and service standards.

whether the state verifies that the HMO has enough trained doctors and other caregivers.

whether the state monitors if it is hard or easy for people to get the treatment they need.

whether there is a convenient way for people to express complaints and receive help should any problem develop with the HMO.

“The complexity of the decision-making about any plan(s) made by this Board deserves, if not demands, adequate time for the concerned public to input comments and suggestions. Any decision about Medicaid and HMOs will affect thousands of Georgians, including support groups such as churches, public interest groups, and charitable organizations which work with them.

“For these person, such groups respectfully request that this Board not finalize its decision today, but rather extend its hearings in order that the general public and concerned organizations may participate in the decision-making and advisory process.”

(Rev.) Edward M. Brown
Chairman

Sub-Committee on Health and Human Services
Georgia-South Carolina Association
United Church of Christ

“WORD AMONG US” WORKSHOP ... Coming Up This Fall!

Sid Fowler, editor of the new curriculum “Word Among Us,” will lead three days of workshops in Atlanta, November 17-19th. Participants will be challenged to explore a variety of ways to use the curriculum, to answer questions, and address concerns. The workshops are being coordinated through Central Congregational UCC.

A tentative schedule of events might be:

Friday—a workshop at Candler School of Theology for clergy, educators, and theological students. Focus will included uses of the “Word Among Us” curriculum in the various ministries of the local church, the theological foundations of the curriculum, questions, etc.

Saturday—workshops for teachers, clergy, worship leaders, educators, and parents. Focus will include use of the curriculum in classroom, making connections between education and worship, use of art, creativity, and imagination in religious education, and much, much more.

Sunday—Sid will teach the adults using the “Word Among Us” curriculum, modeling teaching styles and ways to bring the curriculum to life in the church. Sid will also lead worship, illustrating the connections that can be made between education and worship.

This weekend of workshops is for all who are interested in learning more about this curriculum, meeting the editor, and strengthening the Christian Education program in the church. A brochure will be sent out in the next few weeks. For more information, contact Rev. Joe Hoffman, 2676 Claremont Road N.E., Atlanta, GA 30329; (404) 633-4505.

C E Leadership Training Workshop ... A Fun Time for All

Saturday, August 12th was a wonderful experience in Christian Education. Pilgrim Congregational, Chattanooga, hosted our Fall Workshop. We had teens, adults, children and special leaders present ... Mitch Johnson, Jack Yates, and Yubenia Prigmore did devotions, greetings and introductions. We covered acolyte training, confirmation, curriculum, intergenerational leadership, liturgical dance, music, youth, and local church. In addition there was a great plenary session featuring Rev. Gordon Svoboda, Minister for Education in Human Identity, from our national office! There was something for everyone and a special treat at the end of the day when the children shared what they had learned in liturgical dance. Thank you to all the leaders: Avis Squires, Joe Hoffman, Lester Ariail, Nedra Mahone, Roland Yates, Wendy Welch and Gordon Svoboda.

When Gordon came and joined us for the day, he modeled the excellent returns we get from Our Church's Wider Mission contributions. He brought these special gifts of leadership to a very responsive gathering of SEC people involved in our annual Conference's Christian Education ministries. All of this was made possible in part by the gifts most of our churches make through voluntary contributions to OCWM. Every single church has an opportunity to share this tangible expression of our unity and covenant together in God's work.

Reasons to withhold or abstain from such sharing can easily be found, but the inspiration of one very new church in our Conference delivering a large OCWM check by hand to our Conference office just this past month tells us there is always a way to share for those who hold and keep the larger vision and work of our church in proper focus.

Each Day in the Life of America's Children ...

3 CHILDREN DIED FROM CHILD ABUSE – 15 CHILDREN DIED FROM GUNS – 27 CHILDREN—A CLASSROOM—DIE FROM POVERTY – 95 BABIES DIE BEFORE THEIR FIRST BIRTHDAY – 202 CHILDREN ARE ARRESTED FOR DRUG OFFENSES – 307 CHILDREN ARE ARRESTED FOR VIOLENT CRIMES – 240 CHILDREN ARE ARRESTED FOR DRINKING OR DRUNKEN DRIVING – 1,340 TEENAGERS HAVE BABIES – 2,217 TEENAGERS DROP OUT OF SCHOOL EACH SCHOOL DAY – 2,699 BABIES ARE BORN INTO POVERTY – 8,189 CHILDREN ARE REPORTED ABUSED OR NEGLECTED – 10,000 CHILDREN ARE HOMELESS – 135,000 CHILDREN BRING GUNS TO SCHOOL

(Source: Children's Defense Fund's *The State of America's Children Yearbook 1995*)

The Office for Church in Society, UCC encourages you to

CELEBRATE CHILDREN'S SABBATH

October 22, 1995

Materials are available from:

The Children's Defense Fund

Lauren Shaham, Children's Sabbath

25 E Street North

Washington, DC 20001

(202) 628-8787

The International Day of Prayer and Action for Human Habitat ...

started in 1983 as a day to call attention to the problem of poverty housing and to urge people to answer Jesus Christ's call to help their neighbors in need. This year, a special emphasis on taking action has been added to the Day of Prayer events.

Building on Faith (Sept. 10-17) is a week set aside for congregations to work with their local Habitat affiliates to build or repair houses at an unprecedented level.

For information on how you and your church can become builders in Habitat's ministry, or for ideas on how your congregation can expand its support of Habitat, please contact your local Habitat affiliate. Call 1-800-HABITAT, ext. 551 or 552 for the name of the affiliate nearest you. You also may contact the SEC Office at 756 West Peachtree Street N.W., Atlanta, GA 30308, or call (404) 607-1993.

Planning Ahead for UCC Women

UCC women across the country will be participating in an exciting Third National Meeting in Boston at the Sheraton Hotel on June 27-30, 1996. Included will be top-grade speaker, stimulating workshops, inspiring worship, and an opportunity to meet outstanding women from every state. The theme, "Visions and Voices," speaker to every town and city, and promises insight and inspiration on women's issues.

Registration forms are available from the Coordinating Center for Women, 700 Prospect Avenue, Cleveland, OH 44114. Make your plans now!

The Missionary Relationship Program

What It Is ...

A ministry in health, education, agriculture, and spiritual growth which reaches out to others at home in the USA and around the world.

What It Does ...

Provides an opportunity for UCC congregations to gain greater understanding of the Church. It carries no financial obligation. Through direct correspondence with a United Church Board for World Ministries (UCBWM) missionary in the field, your congregation can personalize mission, raise consciousness, and focus on difference aspects of the mission, as well as provide UCC church family for an overseas missionary.

For more information on how to participate in the Missionary Relationship Program and/or receive additional information about mission programs and materials on Our Church's Wider Mission, contact:

Associate for Resource Information
Stewardship Council, UCC
105 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 683-5656

Notice to UCC Health Plan Members

All active participants of the UCC Health Benefits Plan are eligible for open enrollment for the UCC Dental Benefits package which begins August 1 and ends on Sept. 30, 1995.

Members who have health coverage for themselves only, are eligible for dental coverage for themselves only, unless they apply and are approved for family health coverage in the interim. Family or single coverage is available for those members who have family health coverage, that is:

As a participant in the UCC Health Benefits Plan, you can now apply for dental benefits* (whichever applies):

for yourself. Family dental coverage is not available because you have single health coverage.

for yourself and your eligible dependents.
for your eligible dependents.

If you have questions regarding the open enrollment period or if you wish additional information, contact Shannon R. Karr, Administrative Assistant, Secretary of Benefits, at (212) 870-2972.

Letter From a Friend

Dear friends in the Southeast Conference,

I am enjoying being pastor of the beloved community of faith of the Euclid Avenue Congregational UCC in Cleveland, and find every day a very challenging gift! It is always good to see friends in the worship service each Sunday morning and I hope to see more of you visiting here on your travels.

My heart is deeply grateful for the years of ministry with you in the Southeast Conference; as with Paul's writings to Timothy, "... with tears I long night and day to see you, that I may be filled with joy." I cannot thank every one of you personally, but want you to know my thanks to you, and for you. The ministry with you was of the richest of my years. Thanks be to God, for faith, life, and for you!

My esteem for the call of God to us all in the Southeast Conference was conveyed to you in my reading at the Annual Meeting, June 9. It is repeated below.

Beth and I are in our home here at 1056 Hereford Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio 44112-3638. Of course, I can always be reached at the church, God bless you all.

Faithfully,
Roger Knight

Beloved Friends

Clarion words of call,

*"You Are My Beloved,"
echo-ing through history's hallowed
hearts –*

*re-echoing through the hills and hearts
of the land and peoples –
the Southeast Conference.*

*Place of anguished history
and aching hope,
playing panoramic memories
of battles enacted*

*and struggles re-enacted,
by whatever label.*

*A People of memoried divine call,
uncertain unity,*

*distanced like a denominational appendage
but sustained by bold witnessing,
metamorphosized
into foundation stones of living
history.
Stones that sing –
clarion notes resounding –
as arias of operatic litany
in the Heritage Halls of the Hallowed:
Brainerd Mission to Cherokees at
Chattanooga,
first foreign nation commissioning;
remembering now, being a presence
then on the
Trail of Tears.
Amistad voyage for freedom,
stirring abolition and education,
raising leaders for standing equal
Oh, do view the murals at Talladega!
Dr. Mae Wharton,
unexpectedly trapped by God
to minister to bodies and minds of
Appalachia
Oh, do visit Uplands Retirement Community!
A man called Elder,
transporting the evangel message,
planting a couple dozen churches –
Oh, do sing the songs that reach out and grow!
Diverse peoples, we of the Southeast Conference –
ourselves reflecting the terrains of extreme,
pollutions without policies,
pregnant with possibilities
mixed with some mixing.
A People, like the Holy tribes of old,
through separate journeys
led to God's Holy City in worship
on pilgrimage to tomorrow;
pains of death of a lost tribe, or
congregations
choosing to die in isolation,
giving up the journey of mission.
But always A People, sacramentally in pain and promise,
given by God
the destiny to be an Inclusive Church*

and Witness.

*An indigenous People here,
walking with God's Chosen One, as
God's chosen ones
talking like God's birthing One as new
communities;
turning from death's intrigue and
evil's power
to resurrection's promise, calling and
destiny.*

*A People with tomorrow's eyes and ears
in whom the Wiper of Tears made all
things new—for and with you.*

*Think only for a moment of some caring
friends and heroes of faith to us in the
Southeast, each of whom gave to the
vision of a Promised Southeast Landed Peoples
and never received the Promise –*

*there were Reuben and Franklin,
 Freda and Phemie,
 Jean and Warren,*

*and all the many other souls who lived
and died in the faith.*

*You Are My Beloved—they heard—
YOU ARE mine to be loved, by God!
And Tomorrow,*

*there is the path to be walked,
 the song to be sung,
 an horizon to be eclipsed,
 a vision to fulfill,
 A People Beloved to be loved.*

*God's continuing gracious blessing of
Belovedness be yours, dear friends.*

*6/95 –
Roger D. Knight*

In Search of a YOUTH COORDINATOR for SEC

Needed to facilitate the life, general planning, event planning and generally meet the needs of our Youth. (A Youth Council is already in place to direct the programming for our Conference Youth with the Coordinator's Counsel.)

If interested, send an application to Ms. Yubenia Prigmore, 901 Bethel Street, Sweetwater, TN 37874, providing the following information:

- 1) Your name, address, phone, etc.
- 2) Resume—information about yourself, schooling, job, family, etc.
- 3) Your experience in church, especially related to youth ministry, as a youth and as an adult.
- 4) Why are you applying? What do you bring to the job?
- 5) Questions you have?
- 6) References (three or more): names, addresses, phone numbers, relationship to you.

Please send a duplicate copy of application to:

Interim Conference Minister,
Ed Mehlhaff, 756 West Peachtree N.W.,
Atlanta, GA 30308.

If you desire more information such as detailed job description, salary, etc., call or write the Conference Office at the above address.

Call to Common Prayer for Bosnia-Herzegovina ***from NCC/USA***

As people of faith living in the United States, our hearts are heavy with the continued news of human suffering in Bosnia-Herzegovina and political paralysis throughout the world community. The unrelenting story of human agony and the slaughter of innocents require a response from people of faith lest the very stones cry out, "there is no peace!"

Therefore we call for:

people of every faith in our land to devote themselves to diligent prayers for the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina and for the governments of the world community that they may gain the resolve to act in order to restore peace and justice.

common prayer by people of diverse faiths whenever and wherever possible in churches, mosques and synagogues that we might join our hearts in both sorrow and in hope.

other U.S.-based religious aid and relief organizations to join us in a single interfaith approach to aid and relief in the region as a tangible sign and symbol of the potential for unity even in strife.

from the UCC, Paul H. Sherry:

I am reminded today of a significant event that took place in Stuttgart in October of 1945. There German church leaders, including many who were active in the Confessing Church, in company with Christians from the soon-to-be formed World Council of Churches, issued a declaration in the sight of God and humanity. Surrounded by the ruins of war, and in the face of the Holocaust, they said in part,

"We accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously and for not loving more ardently."

Fifty years later the Stuttgart Declaration continues to confront us amid the agonies of history and the ambiguities of the church's response. I urge you to reflect on its message as we join in prayer for those who suffer.

Short Takes ...

HUMAN SEXUALITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Mark your calendars now! Coming Jan. 18-20, there will be a 3-day training event for churches wanting to use the new adult human sexuality curriculum published by the United Church of Christ. This curriculum is available only to churches who have received the training. Churches are invited to bring a team of 5-6 persons. Faith Johnson and Gordon Svoboda of the Board of Homeland Ministries will lead this training at Central Congregational UCC in Atlanta. This is for all churches in the Southeast Conference. More information to come soon, or call Rev. Joe Hoffman at (404) 633-4505.

NATIONAL YOUTH EVENT in Columbia!!!

Summer of 1996! More info ... Later!

INTERNATIONAL BAZAAR & CRAFT FAIR

Featuring A Large Selection Of Items from SERRV

Along With Local Tennessee Artisans

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1995

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (CDT)

*Come & Enjoy the Fellowship of the Day While Helping to Support World Missions
& Self-Help Projects Throughout the World*

Lunch Items Will Be Available For Purchase

Sponsored by the "NEW" Women's Ministry Group of First United Church, UCC

4099 Owl Hollow Road, Belvidere, TN

(6 miles west of Winchester, TN, 1/4 mile north of U.S. Hwy. 64, on Owl Hollow Road in Belvidere)

(ALL PROFITS GO TO MISSION PROJECTS)

A SOUTH INDIA PILGRIMAGE

Join us for

***The Trip of a Lifetime
Adventure through 2000 years of Christian History,
& 150 years of UCC Mission,
at The American College, Maduria, INDIA,
January 12 – February 10, 1996***

Led by experts! Conducted by experts!

A unique opportunity for insights into the Christian heritage and the cultural heritage of South India.

See where St. Thomas was martyred! Share in the life of the Church of South India! Music and dance by the maestros! New friends from the college faculty and students! Photo and video opportunities! Explore Hinduism and interfaith dialogue in the heartland of Hindu culture! Extensions to Delhi/Agre and other locations available.

Limited-size group, at bargain rates with 3-star living arrangements.

For more information, contact Dick and Joyce Reisz, P.O. Box 384, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578; (615) 277-5642

(UCC Missionaries in Madurai, 1962-92)

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE!

Dick and Trudy Braun, who recently spent six months in volunteer service in Nepal are available to speak and show pictures in SEC churches about the work of the Church in Nepal. Contact them at P.O. Box 371, Pleasant Hill, TN 38578. Phone: (615) 277-5877.

Lala Allen, Alabama Hall of Famer, Leaves a Legacy of Service

Excerpted and Condensed from an article by Frances King, Correspondent to The LaFayette Sun, Wednesday, July 29, 1996

At age 87, Lala Allen doesn't have much time to occupy a porch rocking chair.

The longtime Penton, AL resident finds fulfillment in a busy lifestyle, helping others, thus winning several honors she says are undeserved.

Mrs. Allen was selected by the Alabama Senior Citizens Hall of Fame Commission as an honorary member for her "outstanding and valued contributions

to the lives of older American citizens.” The Hall of Fame Awards and Induction will be held Sunday, September 24, at 1:30 p.m. at the Montgomery Civic Center.

Among Mrs. Allen’s accomplishments cited for her nomination were:

- visiting older citizens in the community—helping, listening, preparing food for those in need and grief, volunteering work and spending time with nursing home patients;

- making the community a safer place by supporting the Fire and Rescue Squad;

- working with the Chambers County Health Council to improve the lives of elderly people;

- helping to establish and grow the Union Hill Community Club 26 years ago (Six churches now participate and several smaller offshoots of the group sponsor occasional Soup Suppers to honor those 80 and older);

- working to improve the lives of retired teachers in Chambers County and the nation;

- working on the Chambers County Enterprise Community Committee with the East Alabama Planning Commission to secure a \$3 million Enterprise Community grant for the betterment of the county;

- giving regularly to United Givers, Red Cross, Heart Fund, Cancer Society, Easter Seals, Habitat for Humanity, Alzheimer’s Disease and the Fire Department.

Perhaps Mrs. Allen’s most significant achievements are linked to her greatest love—her church and denominational work.

On July 2, Mrs. Allen was one of 90 church women, representing 40 states, cited by the 20th General Synod UCC for outstanding contributions to their churches and communities.

The UCC Office of Communication wrote, “At 87 Lala Allen is considered a ‘dynamo’ at LaFayette’s Pleasant Grove Congregational Christian UCC. A retired teacher and active farmer, she has served on the Board of Directors for the UCC’s Southeast Conference and member of the Conference’s Visions ’91 Finance Campaign, helping it to exceed its \$150,000 fund-raising goal. She is also donating 100 acres of land in East Alabama for the development of a self-sustaining Conference retreat center. Her nominators describe Mrs. Allen as ‘a marvelous matriarch of integrity, wisdom, wit and love.’”

This award is given every two years. More than 1,000 laywomen have been named since its establishment in 1983.

Mrs. Allen was also named Woman of the Year by the Southeast Conference. Mrs. Allen was distinguished by the East Alabama-West Georgia Association as Women’s Fellowship Woman of the Year at the annual meeting in Wadley.

She is leaving a legacy for young people to enjoy, donating 100 acres of her property for a retreat center. “I don’t have any children of my own, but if I can leave the land to young people or the Conference, it will make me happy. If the retreat center becomes a reality, regardless of denomination. If it ceases to be for Christian purposes, I want it to go back to my estate.”

Mrs. Allen also gave Pleasant Grove Church a fellowship hall, named for her late husband J. Emory Allen, and an endowment fund for the cemetery. Other involvement includes the Wadley Inter-Se Club and organizing the PALS (People Against A Littered State).

A school teacher for 45 years, Mrs. Allen has been active in the Chambers County Retired Teachers Association, holding several offices including president and has chaired several important committees.

Concerned for the younger generation and for people who take their Christianity too lightly, Mrs. Allen says, "I was carried to church before I was old enough to remember. Now I want to leave a legacy behind ... The Lord has blessed me and been good to me."

Imaging The Future of Faith Communities

The purpose of "Imaging the Future of Faith Communities" is to intentionally engage many settings of the Church in constructive dialogue and biblically informed discernment about what God may be doing in the Church during these times of considerable change. The programmatic offerings will describe some of the demographic realities facing the United Church of Christ and explore images emerging of the Church's future. It is crucial to our life together in the Church to find constructive ways to name the strains facing the Church, to be able to contextualize those prayerfully and theologically to move creatively and hopefully towards a future which may vary considerably from the past we've known.

A One-Day Retreat for Pastors and/or Church Leaders:

This day-long (five and a half hours) is perfect as a continuing education or retreat offering for pastors and other church professionals, or for a church leaders' day for laity and clergy. Materials used include a variety of biblical texts, as well as *Transforming Congregations For the Future* and *More Than Numbers* by Loren Mead, research information about the United Church of Christ from the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and work by various futurists, like Alvin and Heidi Toffler. The outline includes presentation, worship, and time for small group and individual reflection.

For those interested, applications may be requested from the Conference Office.

CLERGY CONVERSATION GATHERINGS with Ed Mehlhaff

I am most eager to sit around the table with the ministers of the Conference for conversation. These meeting times will provide each of you the opportunity to share to whatever degree you choose, what is happening with you and your parish. It will be a time together for reflection, support, futuring, upbuilding, and enhancing our covenant life. These meetings will be on Tuesdays during the month

of October from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (bring a “brown bag” lunch) at the following locations:

Oct. 3, Atlanta Center Congregational UCC, 1055 Moores Mill Road, (404) 351-2747

Oct. 10, Andalusia, First Congregational UCC, 321 Dunston Street, (334) 222-3379

Oct. 17, Lanett Congregational Christian, 900 South 7th Avenue, (334) 644-1514

Oct. 24, Chattanooga Pilgrim Congregational, 400 Glenwood at 3rd, (615) 698-5682

You are welcome at any of these meetings. Be there and we believe you will be nourished in every way!

AROUND THE CONFERENCE

Jim and Jewel Courtney have both had heart bypass surgery. Jim, in March, and is doing well; Jewel, immediately following our Annual Meeting, and is having some struggles. Keep them both in your thoughts and prayers.

John Whatley, Columbia Fellowship, had eye surgery and is healing. Prayers will help.

Miss Lala Allen had been selected to be installed into the Alabama Hall of Fame as Outstanding Senior Citizen of the State (See above).

United Church of Huntsville is celebrating its 35th anniversary with a weekend of events beginning Sept. 29th. Ed Mehlhaff will be preaching. Congratulations and may you have a successful celebration! Jim Norris is pastor.

Please note dates of the Association meetings. These are great times for fellowship, learning, worship and information sharing.

Also, CLERGY DO ATTEND THE SCHEDULED CLERGY CONVERSATION GATHERINGS! Dialogue can birth the new.

At Central Congregational UCC, Atlanta: Linda Herzer, administrative assistant for the last five years has resigned as of July 31st. Ricky Preacher has agreed to serve as an interim administrative assistant and began her work on July 17th. Gratitude and good wishes to all! ALSO, Central's family from Bosnia, the Dudichs, seem to be adapting well to their new home here in Atlanta. They have found employment and are taking English classes. A special thanks to the Refugee Committee and all other volunteers who have done so much to assist them.

First Congregational Christian Church, UCC, Birmingham, AL was awarded a certificate for the best newsletter submitted by the SEC in the 1995 Office of Communication Newsletter Contest.

SYMPATHY IS EXTENDED TO:

The family and friends of REV. TALMAGE HARTMAN, who died June 28th in a Wisconsin nursing home. He was the founding pastor of Brookmeade and served there from 1953-1955. He also founded Waverly Community Church, UCC, in Waverly, TN.

Family of Dr. Ida B. Scudder, who died at Wharton Nursing Home after a lengthy illness. She had a prominent role in Vellore Hospital, India.

Family of Euphemia (Phemie) Young, who died March 16th of this year. In 1995, Phemie was chosen by the SEC to be honored by the General Synod for her service and leadership in the UCC.

Family and friends of Dr. William L. Cash, who died April 22nd in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Dr. Cash was Professor of Psychology at Prairie View A&M College and the University of North Dakota. In 1968, he returned to the University of Michigan as assistant to the president until his retirement, but continued to teach until 1994.

NEEDED: Your old hymnals. Would welcome *Pilgrim Hymnals*. Call the Conference Office.

AVAILABLE: *The New Century Hymnal* will be available to local churches in mid-August. Thanks for your patience.

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP VACANCIES

(Church—Location—Interim)

Central—Atlanta—TBA

First UCC—Sweetwater—Rev. Bob Johnson

Community—Fairfield Glade—Rev. Tom Eckert

First Congregational—Marion—Rev. Anthony Trimble

First Congregational—Montgomery—Chaplain Bennie Liggins

First Congregational—Savannah—Supply

New Hope—Clio—Supply

United Community—Waverly—Supply

Pleasant Grove—LaFayette—Winston Clark

ASSOCIATE PASTOR VACANCIES

First Congregational—Atlanta—Rev. Susan Newman, pastor

St. John's United—Cullman—Rev. Bob Kurtz, pastor

PASTOR LEAVING

Central Congregational, Atlanta—Rev. Dr. Stephen Sterner has been called to be a teacher and pastor of the Church of the Beatitudes in Phoenix, Ariz. We will miss Steve and Judy, but wish them Godspeed and blessings in their new ministry!

PULPITS RECENTLY FILLED

Circular Congregational—Charleston—Annette Nielsen, Co-Pastor
Pilgrim Congregational—Chattanooga—John Mingus
Elder UCC—Dadeville—Wayde Washburn

CONFERENCE MINISTER *TRAVELOGUE*

I want to let you know that I have been in the following churches for worship/preaching and/or meetings: Pilgrim, Chattanooga; Community Church, Pleasant Hill; Amistad, Atlanta; Congregational Christian, Lanett; Pilgrimage, Marietta; First Congregational, Birmingham; UCC Fellowship, Columbia; Trinity, Jonesboro; Center Church, Atlanta; First Congregational, Atlanta; Central, Atlanta; United Christian Church, Crossville; First Congregational, Montgomery; Brookmeade Congregational, Nashville; Pleasant Grove, LaFayette.

I am scheduled for several more congregations for preaching and teaching. These visits were for a variety of reasons: preaching and meeting with conversation groups, installations, ordination, pastoral search committees, stewardship, goal-setting, conflict resolution, church construction, anniversaries, and futuring.

I have discovered a collage of such variety that I was able to say, "This truly is the United Church of Christ in all its diversity." I have experienced a variety of worship forms, amazing amount of talented persons, a well-informed group of persons around the misunderstanding of the Conference and the wider church, and in every place, Dona and I experienced wonderful hospitality. I look forward to visiting every church in the Conference. If you don't invite me, I'll invite myself. I want to hear your concerns, hope, dreams, expectations and celebrate your joys with you! I also want to answer questions you have about the Conference and the wider church.

I am privileged, honored and challenged to be serving with and amongst you. Dona and I look forward to continuing our pilgrimage with you. We can truly say, "we love you."

--Ed

CONFERENCE CALENDAR

August

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 6 | Crossville, United Christian Church
11 a.m., Ed Mehlhaff preaching
3 p.m., Ordination Service—Brice Hughes |
| 7-8 | Southeast Conference Retreat Center Committee—
Pleasant Grove UCC |
| 12 | Christian Education Workshop |

	9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
	Chattanooga, Pilgrim Congregational
10-14	Mehlhaff Family Reunion—South Dakota
11-12	Conference Minister Search Committee—Birmingham
19	GA/SC Church & Ministry Committee Meeting
24	Mitch & Ed Staff Meeting, 1 p.m.
27	Heart of GA Fellowship, Macon—3 p.m., Ed Mehlhaff
September	
4	OFFICE CLOSED, LABOR DAY
8-9	AL/TN Assn. Annual Meeting—Nashville, Brookmeade
10	Nashville, Brookmeade, Ed Mehlhaff preaching
15-16	GA/SC Assn. Annual Meeting—Marietta, Amistad UCC
17	Jonesboro, Trinity, Ed Mehlhaff preaching
21	Mitch & Ed Staff Meeting, 1 p.m.
22-23	Southeast Conference Board of Directors Meeting— Atlanta, Central Congregational
29-30	Women's Regional Meeting—Blowing Rock, NC
29-31	Huntsville, United Church, Ed Mehlhaff preaching
October	
3	Clergy Conversation Gathering, Ed & Mitch— 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Atlanta, Center Congregational
7	SAL/NWFL Assn. Annual Meeting—Brantley, Liberty Church
10	Clergy Conversation Gathering, Ed & Mitch— 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Andalusia, First Congregational
14	Annual Meeting Planning Committee, 11:30 a.m., Belvidere First United Church
15	Belvidere, First United, Ed Mehlhaff preaching
17	Clergy Conversation Gathering, Ed & Mitch, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Lanett Congregational
19	Mitch & Ed Staff Meeting, 1 p.m.
21	EAL/WGA Assn. Annual Meeting—Woodbury, Jones Chapel
23	Georgia Council of Churches, Augusta—Ed
24	Clergy Conversation Gathering, Ed & Mitch 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Chattanooga, Pilgrim Congregational
November	
4	Atlanta, First Congregational, African-American Evangelism Seminar—Led by Paul Sadler, UCBHM—10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
9-10	National Stewardship Meeting, Nashville
10-11	Commission Chairperson's Program Planning Meeting—Mitch
12	ABLE Meeting (Atlantans Building Leadership Empowerment) —4 p.m.

14 Clergy New to Conference Orientation, Conference Office
—Mitch & Ed
16 Mitch & Ed Staff Meeting
23-24 OFFICE CLOSED—THANKSGIVING

THE SOUTHEAST NEWS

Published by the Southeast Conference

United Church of Christ

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PROJECT

